

OCTOBER 2019

TODAY IN THE WORD™



*In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed.
In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.*

Exodus 15:13

FREED FOR A PURPOSE

A Study in Exodus

TODAY WITH MARK JOBE

President of Moody Bible Institute

Holy Hunger



Have you ever gone for an extended period of time without eating? Maybe you were trying to reduce calories or you skipped meals for a lab test. When we

are hungry, our appetite demands to be satisfied. I wonder what would happen if we had that same type of insatiable hunger for God?

In Exodus 33, Moses shows us an example of spiritual hunger. Moses was on the mountain where he had received the Ten Commandments. After he had been gone 40 days, he came down to witness an all-out pagan party. God was angry. He called the Israelites a “stiff-necked people” and told Moses that, in order to honor His covenant with Israel, they would still get to the Promised Land. But God would not go with them. He explained that if He went with them, “I might destroy you on the way” (v. 3).

Moses, in his reply, reveals his hunger for God. His spiritual appetite had been cultivated by the time spent in God’s presence. Verse 11 says, “The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.” So when God offered Moses this lower-shelf deal of “I will bless you but my presence will not go there,” Moses’ holy hunger kicked in.

In verse 15, Moses asks God not to remove His presence, but to be present with the people of Israel on their journey. And when the Lord agreed (v. 17), Moses pushed even further. Moses wanted even more, “Now show me your glory” (v. 18). Moses hungered for God; he wanted to see God.

In this dramatic passage, Moses is rewarded with a glimpse of God’s glory. In his present earthly state, he was unable to look fully on God. Instead, God placed Moses safely in the cleft of a rock with His hand covering his eyes. He is granted a glimpse of God’s back (vv. 22–23). What an incredible moment that must have been!

You and I have been created with holy hunger. Our physical body parallels our spiritual body. The Bible teaches that all creation has been “groaning” as it waits for God (Rom. 8:22). Psalm 42:1 describes this longing: “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.” We cannot fill this hunger with relationships, success, addictions, popularity, or anything else. Holy hunger is only filled by God through our relationship with Jesus Christ. And then, like Moses, we will be unwilling to move forward without His presence in our lives (vv. 14-17). ■

THEOLOGY MATTERS

by Dr. John Koessler

The Theology of Exodus

Exodus is a book of history. We learn how God rescued the descendants of Abraham from slavery in Egypt, established them as a nation, and directed them to the Land of Promise. Exodus is also an autobiography of sorts because the story of its author, Moses, unfolds within these pages. We might even think Exodus is an exposé since it reveals the faithfulness and faithlessness of God's Old Testament people. But more than anything else, Exodus is a book of theology. While Moses and Israel play key roles in this book, God is firmly at the center.

God's power is revealed in Exodus. We see a God clearly in control, even when everyone else refuses to cooperate. From Moses to Pharaoh to the people of Israel, nearly everyone involved in this great story of redemption resists God, at least at first. The book of Exodus reveals how God used His power to bring Israel out of the land of slavery "with a mighty hand" (Ex. 13:3, 14).

Exodus also teaches us about God's holiness. When Moses encountered God in the burning bush, he was commanded to remove his sandals "for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). When the Lord defeated the Egyptians at the Red Sea, Moses and

Miriam sang of God's holiness, how He would lead the people He had redeemed and guide them to His holy dwelling (Ex. 15:13). The law reinforced this lesson of holiness and taught that God was separate from His people (Ex. 19:23).

Yet the most important theological lesson of Exodus reveals God's personal nature. This all-powerful, holy God has a name (Ex. 3:13–15). According to Old Testament scholar R. Alan Cole, the divine name YHWH or *I Am* indicated an advance in God's revelation of Himself: "Henceforth, for the Old Testament, the name YHWH will mean all that the name 'Jesus' means for the New Testament." Jesus claimed this name for Himself (John 8:58). Further, Jesus embodied all of the theological themes found in Exodus. He is the divine person who shows us the face of God. His death is the only sacrifice that can fulfill the law's demand for holiness. And His power is the key to our salvation: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY

To learn more about Exodus, read *Gleanings in Exodus* by A. W. Pink (Moody Publishers).

FROM THE EDITORS

by Jamie Janosz

Meet This Month's Devotional Writer: Dr. Brad Baurain



Brad Baurain, is an associate professor at Moody Bible Institute and Moody Theological Seminary. He is also a former editor and

the author of more than 70 issues of Today in the Word! One reader notes, "It was interesting to me to go through my stack of favorite past issues and realize the majority were written by one author. . . . Dr. Brad Baurain!" Brad and his wife, Julia, have four children and live in northwestern Indiana.

What did you take away from this month's study of Exodus?

Exodus is a rich narrative and awe-inspiring book, by which I mean it inspires a deep awe of God. Egypt was a world superpower, but it didn't stand a chance against the Almighty. God kept His promises, liberated His people to become a "holy nation," and proved Himself faithful. The treasures of idolatrous Egypt were transformed into a tabernacle for worship of the one true God.

What do you love about teaching at Moody?

One thing I enjoy most about teaching is learning. We always need to be learning, which is something I believe

God created us to do. I love teaching at Moody because the eternal purposes that motivate me are also at the heart of this great institution. We're all about God's Word and God's glory. I'm currently the only TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) professor at Moody and lead both the BA and MA programs.

How did you get interested in this area of missions?

While in college, I got my start in this area as a World Relief volunteer and ended up serving eleven years with a Christian organization in China and Vietnam. Now I'm privileged to help train others to go! The English language is in demand around the world, and excellent teachers can be used for God's glory literally anywhere—whether in "creative-access" countries overseas or here in North America with refugees and immigrants.

Did you meet your wife on the mission field?

We didn't actually meet in China or Vietnam, but in an even stranger place . . . southern California! We were both participating in training for our organization. She was headed to northeastern China, me to south central Vietnam. It began as a casual friendship and just kept growing. ■

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SENIOR EDITOR

Elena Mafter

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

John Koessler

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TODAY IN THE WORD™

Exodus: Freed for a Purpose

In our journey through life, we all experience setbacks, disappointments, and our own wilderness experience. Sometimes we feel powerless and not up to task. We all need strength for the journey. We pray that our study this month will show us that this strength comes from God, that He Himself is our strength.

As we read the book of Exodus with *Today in the Word*, we'll trace Israel's way from slavery to freedom, from idolatry and grumbling to trust in God and true worship, from physical and spiritual poverty to the riches of the tabernacle. We'll learn about the covenant faithfulness of the God of the Bible who controls history, who judges His own people and His foes, and who stops at nothing to bring His people to freedom. We'll read about the first Passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, the Ten Commandments, and the building of the tabernacle. We'll also learn from the life of Moses about leadership, humility, God's calling, and God's perfect timing.

Thank you for studying with us this month! May the Lord be your strength as you follow Him. May He enrich each day with His presence and guidance through all the seasons of your life as you grow closer to Christ and know Him better. Thank you for your faithful support of the ministry of *Today in the Word!* ■

—Elena Mafter, Senior Editor

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TUESDAY
OCTOBER

1

God will surely come to your aid.

Genesis 50:24

A Stressful Situation

The book of Exodus is one of the most important historical narratives in Scripture. It includes adventure, rescue, supernatural confrontations between good and evil, and the mass liberation of a people from slavery. In these pages, you'll meet a hero (Moses) and a villain (Pharaoh). You'll see God work miracles and wonders as we witness the birth of a nation. Key themes of Exodus include God's love and faithfulness, the Law and covenant, obedience, holiness, redemption, and worship.

Exodus is the second book in the Old Testament, following Genesis where a dying Joseph made this prophetic promise: "God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Gen. 50:24; see also Gen. 15:13–14). Here we see that promise fulfilled! The book's author was probably Moses (see Ex. 24:4). While the exact date of writing is

uncertain, the date of the Exodus itself is often placed at 1446 BC.

Between Joseph's death and the first chapter of Exodus, much had changed. When Jacob and his extended family first arrived, the group numbered just 70 people (Ex. 1:5). Four centuries later, the Israelites had exploded in population to about two million people—603,550 men counted in a later census (Ex. 38:26), plus women and children. Their status had also changed. They had come at Pharaoh's invitation, now they were in slavery (vv. 12–14).

But God was present, even in this hard situation. When a fearful Egyptian king ordered newborn Israelite males to be killed, the Lord raised up two women of faith, Shiphrah and Puah. Knowledge of the promises to Abraham had clearly been passed down, for these women "feared God" and saved lives (v. 17). And the Lord blessed them (vv. 20–21).

APPLY THE WORD

As we begin this month's study, ask God to prepare your heart and mind. Be open to the many lessons and insights He has for you from this rich book! And, since the Exodus is the historical event referred to most often throughout the entire Old Testament, this study will be foundational for your ongoing study of the rest of Scripture.

PRAY WITH US

Join us this month as we start our journey of prayer and study of the book of Exodus. We praise God for the Moody community and pray that the Holy Spirit will work mightily in your life with the truth of Scripture through *Today in the Word*.

*But God will never forget the needy;
the hope of the afflicted will never perish.*

Psalm 9:18

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER

2

The Birth of Hope

Poet Emily Dickinson compared hope to a bird: “Hope is the thing with feathers / That perches in the soul, / And sings the tune without the words, / And never stops at all, / And sweetest in the gale is heard; / And sore must be the storm / That could abash the little bird / That kept so many warm.” Even in the midst of great hardship, Dickinson suggests, hope will provide warmth and comfort.

Exodus 2 marks the birth of hope for the Israelites, and it begins with a tiny baby hidden in a basket. Baby Moses would grow up to become God’s chosen deliverer. If Pharaoh had had his way, Moses would not have lived much past birth. But he survived thanks to the courage of his parents and sister, Miriam, who hid him in the small basket and sent him down the Nile River. God guided the basket into the hands of an Egyptian princess who not only adopted Moses but, ironically, hired his real mother to take care of him (vv. 8–10).

The deliverance of the deliverer sets the tone for the rest of the book!

Then the narrative takes an unexpected turn. Moses, age 40, murdered an Egyptian overseer. As the news spread, Moses fled for his life and ended up in Midian, living as a desert shepherd with a wife and family. Interestingly, his extended family included a father-in-law named Reuel, meaning “friend of God.” (Jethro was apparently a title, not a personal name.)

Moses’ sense of exile is seen in the naming of his son, Gershom, when he commented, “I have become a foreigner in a foreign land” (v. 22). When would God’s people be free? The time of deliverance had nearly arrived. The chosen deliverer was alive and safe. “God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob” (v. 24). The stage was set.

APPLY THE WORD

What did you learn about God from today’s reading? This is an excellent question to ask whenever you read Scripture. After all, God’s Word is in the end a revelation of Himself. Today we learned that God is in control. We also learn that while His timing is not ours, He makes and keeps promises and hears prayers.

PRAY WITH US

Moody Radio brings godly encouragement and edification to thousands of homes every day. Please join vice president Doug Hastings and his teams in prayer as Moody Radio’s fundraising event, Share, starts today.

THURSDAY
OCTOBER

3

*Take off your sandals, for the place
where you are standing is holy ground.*

Exodus 3:5

Reluctant Obedience

The words of the well-known spiritual, “Go Down, Moses,” describe the emotional anguish of the Israelites as they waited for deliverance: “When Israel was in Egypt’s land, Let my people go, / Oppressed so hard they could not stand, Let my people go. / Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt’s land, / Tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.”

But when God first asked, Moses did not appear eager for the task. One day, while Moses was taking care of his sheep on Mount Horeb (also called Sinai), he saw a bush that burned but was not consumed. How could this be? What did it mean? This was God’s way of getting Moses’ attention (3:3). Moses removed his shoes, a gesture of respect and humility that was only proper before the God of his ancestors (v. 6). He also hid his face in fear and reverence. God then announced His plan: to rescue His people and bring

them from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan (vv. 7–10). Moses didn’t exactly rise to the occasion. His first response was doubt, asking, “Don’t you know I’m just a shepherd? Don’t you know how spectacularly I failed 40 years ago?” God assured him, “I will be with you” (vv. 11–12). Then Moses asked God’s name, to which the Lord responded, “I AM WHO I AM”—the uncaused Cause, the unmoved Mover, the very ground of all existence and reality (v. 14).

Despite reminders of God’s promises to the patriarchs, and despite powerful signs, Moses continued to stall, eventually blurting out, “Please send someone else” (4:13). What an unlikely hero! Had God picked the wrong man for the job? Of course not! By choosing a person like Moses, God shows us that He alone would get the credit and glory for what’s about to happen.

APPLY THE WORD

When God called Moses, he dragged his feet. Why? Because he had his eyes on himself. The bottom line, by contrast, was God’s promise, “I will be with you” (3:12). “Calling” is all about God, not us! Whatever your calling is, you can obey it with this same knowledge—wherever the path leads and whatever the outcomes, He is with you.

PRAY WITH US

As Moody Radio’s Share continues today, please pray for the staff of WDLM, broadcasting in the Quad Cities: Jason Crosby, Ken Brooks, and Deborah Gustafson. We pray this station whose call letters commemorate D. L. Moody will always be a light to the community.

The testing of your faith produces perseverance.

James 1:3

Learning from Failure

According to *The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking* by Edward B. Burger and Michael Starbird, failure is a key to effectiveness. The authors explain that we learn from our missteps. “Failure is a critical element of effective learning, teaching, and creative problem solving. Mistakes teach us to focus on the specific task of determining why the attempt at hand failed. Effective failure is an important, positive . . . step toward success.”

In today’s reading, we see that Moses obediently did what God called him to do. And the Israelites’ initial response had been positive: They believed and worshiped (4:29–31). But Pharaoh apparently hadn’t gotten the memo. He refused to grant Moses’ request and responded by accusing the Israelites of laziness and doubling down on their harsh treatment (5:6–9). His intent was to crush their spirits and turn them against Moses and Aaron (5:21; 6:9).

Had Moses failed? Yes, from a human perspective, this outcome appeared to be a total face plant. But God had already said this was how Pharaoh would respond, so (from God’s perspective) events were proceeding precisely according to His plan (4:21–23). Perhaps God’s purpose in this seeming misstep was to impress upon Moses the enormity of the task, giving him all the more reason to depend on the Lord. It would not simply be a matter of marching into the palace and demanding, “Let my people go!” It seems that God also wanted Moses to see the fickleness of the Israelites and how difficult his job of leading them would be. Ultimately, in the course of these confrontations Moses’ faith and bold trust in the Lord would grow, leading to even more glory for God when all was said and done.

APPLY THE WORD

Being obedient to our calling is not a guarantee that we will never fail. In fact, it is just the opposite. Jesus already prayed for us in this regard (John 15:18–21). If you find yourself in a position where it feels like you’re swimming upstream to do the right thing, we encourage you to persevere and by God’s grace to count it all joy (James 1:2–4).

PRAY WITH US

Our prayer today, Lord, is that like Moses in today’s devotional, we’ll be faithful to our calling and won’t be discouraged by setbacks. Help us see them as the reason to depend on you. Thank you, Lord, that you have a plan and a calling for our lives!

SATURDAY
OCTOBER

5

*I will redeem you with an outstretched arm
and with mighty acts of judgment.*

Exodus 6:6

God Promises Deliverance

Despite a discouraging start, the Israelites would be liberated exactly as God had said. And even though he initially wavered, Moses would end up in Hebrew 11's Faith Hall of Fame: "By faith . . . [he] chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb. 11:24–28).

God had promised to free His people through Moses, and in today's reading, when things looked bleakest, He renewed that promise. Yesterday we saw how easily liberation can "fail" and how powerless Moses was compared to Pharaoh. Moses' irritated question sounds only natural: "Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this

people, and you have not rescued your people at all" (5:22–23).

How did the Lord answer? "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go" (6:1). This response only makes sense if God is who He says He is, the great "I am" against whom none can stand. God had chosen Moses for this task and this moment. He had a plan for the entire timeline! Not only would He free the people from their oppressors, but He would also make them His special covenant people and bring them safely to a new land, just as He'd promised (6:6–8).

Both the Israelites (6:9) and Moses (6:12, 30) nonetheless faced discouragement. To encourage Moses, God graciously appointed Aaron to share some of the load (7:1–2) and again provided a bird's-eye view of what was about to happen (7:3–5).

APPLY THE WORD

Moses had a problem trusting God. He'd told the Lord, "I have never been eloquent . . . I am slow of speech and tongue" (4:10). In today's reading, he mentioned his "faltering lips," also translated as "clumsy speaker" (6:12, 30). Do you have an area where trusting the Lord is a challenge? Ask Him today to use your weakness for His glory.

PRAY WITH US

Exodus 5 shows us a beautiful picture of God's faithfulness to the people of Israel. Join us in prayer of gratitude to the Lord for His covenant love and faithfulness to us today. Praise Him that all His promises are "yes and amen" in Christ.

*Blessed is the one who always trembles before God,
but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble.*

Proverbs 28:14

SUNDAY
OCTOBER

6

Blood, Frogs, Gnats, and Flies

One of the most popular attractions at the Bronx Zoo is its one-of-a-kind Bug Carousel. Instead of mounting horses or other animals, children climb aboard 64 different types of insects, such as fireflies, grasshoppers, and ladybugs. They can even ride a monarch butterfly and a dung beetle! Each insect has been realistically hard-carved and painted. The carousel's music includes actual insect sounds recorded by the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The bugs featured in today's reading, however, were no fun at all. Moses had again confronted Pharaoh, and although he worked the miraculous signs, his request was again denied. So God began to send plagues on the land, and a basic pattern emerged: The plague would physically and spiritually damage Egypt, then Pharaoh would relent somewhat, then the plague would be lifted, and the ruler would change his mind. This was essentially what

happened through the first four plagues, as the Nile River water turned to blood, and frogs, gnats, and flies swarmed throughout the land.

Pharaoh's hard heart reflected pride, stubbornness, and a refusal to acknowledge the Lord. He was arrogantly sure the gods of Egypt, or at least his own royal power, would prevail.

How can both be true: God hardened Pharaoh's heart (9:12) and Pharaoh hardened his own heart (8:15)? The answer is "compatibilism." *The Moody Bible Commentary* explains: "[E]ven though God determined . . . that Pharaoh would exhibit a hardened heart, since there were no constraining causes (that is, Pharaoh was not forced to act against what he wanted to do anyway) he was free and thus he is responsible for his own hard heart. Pharaoh freely chose to do exactly what God determined he would do."

APPLY THE WORD

Is your heart "hard" or "soft"? A "hard heart" does not give the Lord the honor and worship He deserves. It refuses to listen to God's voice or obey His commands, insisting that it knows best. By contrast, as followers of Christ, we must make it our constant priority to cultivate a "soft heart," one that depends on and takes delight in Him.

PRAY WITH US

Lord, may we delight in you always and depend on you in all circumstances. May we listen to your voice and obey you. We pray that our hearts will not be hardened, but be open to your guidance.

MONDAY
OCTOBER

7

*When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom.*

Proverbs 11:2

Dead Livestock, Boils, and Hail

In 2003, the Xinjiang region in northwestern China experienced a devastating plague of gerbils. The “great gerbil” of Central Asia can grow up to 16 inches long and is basically a large rat. Hordes of them devoured eleven million acres of grassland, an area about the size of Switzerland.

Plagues can do a huge damage in a very short period of time. That was certainly the case in today’s reading. The fifth plague killed livestock all over Egypt—except for Goshen. Pharaoh verified this fact, but it didn’t alter his response. The sixth plague of boils affected people and the remaining animals. The seventh plague of hail wiped out most crops and animals left from the previous plagues. In that instance, the Egyptians were given a merciful warning to take shelter. Some heeded it, some didn’t.

Similar to the pattern described yesterday, note several developments.

First, while somehow the Egyptian magicians had been able to replicate the first two plagues, they’d been unable to end or reverse any of them. In fact, they themselves got a bad case of the boils (v. 11)! God’s power was clearly greater. Second, the faith of the Israelites grew stronger as they witnessed God act on their behalf, protecting the land of Goshen starting with the fourth plague. Third, Moses was learning about the power of intercession. His prayers and obedience often played a role in God’s timing for starting and stopping the plagues.

What was the larger purpose behind these wonders? As God told Pharaoh, “that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth” (v. 16; see Rom. 9:16–18). His intention was to make known His name and power to all, whether Israelite slaves or a proud Egyptian king.

APPLY THE WORD

If pride comes before a fall, today’s reading offers a dramatic illustration. Pharaoh’s behavior clearly shows the destructive effects of pride. Instead of yielding to the Lord, he bluffed. He lied. He tried to “negotiate.” He doubled down on his stubborn and foolish choices. If you feel the prompting of the Holy Spirit, repent of the sin of pride today.

PRAY WITH US

Today we invite you to pray for Moody’s vice president of Human Resources, Debbie Zelinski, and the staff she leads. They work hard to help provide employees and faculty with a thriving work environment and rewarding ministry experience.

Why do you harden your hearts?

1 Samuel 6:6

Locusts and Darkness

Nearly every book in the Old Testament refers to the dramatic moment of the Exodus, especially the Psalms. Psalm 78, for example, looks back to “the day he [God] redeemed them [the people of Israel] from the oppressor, the day he displayed his signs in Egypt . . . He brought his people out like a flock; he led them like sheep through the wilderness” (Ps. 78:40–55).

The wonders God worked in Egypt on behalf of His people inspired faith in many subsequent generations of Israelites (Ex. 10:2). The so-called “gods” of Egypt were swept aside by the one true King of kings. Hapi, god of the Nile, would have been humiliated by the first plague. Heqt, god of childbirth, often represented as a frog, was mocked by the second plague. Various gods were represented as bulls and cows, but they couldn’t save the livestock. Seth, god of wind and

storms, couldn’t stop the hail. Min, god of fertility and vegetation, couldn’t save the crops from the locusts. Serapis, god of the land, couldn’t protect it.

And when darkness covered Egypt for three days during the ninth plague, everyone but Pharaoh gave up and acknowledged the superior greatness of God. Why? Because the Egyptian pantheon of idols was ruled by Ra, the sun god. God sending darkness was a direct and unequivocal statement that He was bringing “judgment on all the gods of Egypt” (Ex. 12:12).

After the eighth plague, Pharaoh confessed, “I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you” (Ex. 10:16). Yet even so, his heart remained hard. After the ninth plague, he even threatened Moses: “Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die” (Ex. 10:28).

APPLY THE WORD

What a dramatic story! Filmmakers have long seen its potential. If you wish, plan to watch a good movie about the Exodus, such as *The Ten Commandments*, *Prince of Egypt*, or *Moses* (starring Ben Kingsley). Though some artistic license has been taken, these movies portray the essential themes of the biblical narrative.

PRAY WITH US

Please uphold in prayer MBI’s media ministries, headed by senior vice president Greg Thornton. Pray that God will continue to give him wisdom and grace as he oversees the operation of our media branch.

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER

9

*Without the shedding of blood
there is no forgiveness.*

Hebrews 9:22

Firstborn Sons and Blood on Doorposts

When the Law was given on Mount Sinai, the Israelites learned to make various sacrifices for atonement and worship. The blood of animals symbolized a ceremonial or outward cleanness that became spiritually real thanks to Christ's sacrifice of Himself on the cross for sin (see Heb. 9:11–22). But even before the Law was given, God used the tenth plague to begin to teach His people that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22). The blood of a lamb, spread on the doorposts of their homes, would mark them for life instead of death. Because of the blood, the angel of death would “pass over” them on that fateful day (Ex. 12:23).

Moses boldly announced the tenth plague in the same audience with Pharaoh as when he was told, “Get out of my sight!” (10:28). This plague would be the final one. And it would break Pharaoh's will, ending the standoff. In this dramatic finale, all the firstborn

sons of Egypt, both people and cattle, would die (12:29–30). Only the Israelites would be spared. Such an event would be a family and cultural catastrophe—a judgment to end all judgments.

Given that Moses had a perfect track record, Pharaoh should have listened. But as God warned, “Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you—so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt” (11:9). God did not send this final plague lightly. According to the *Moody Bible Commentary*, “The wonders that should have produced humility, repentance, and submission to the word of the Lord yielded a hard heart and culminated in a final, terrible retribution.”

Up to this time, Moses hadn't known exactly when the plagues would end or when deliverance would happen. His growing faith had been open-ended, rooted in the knowledge that God always keeps His promises.

APPLY THE WORD

Moses' step-by-step faith during the ten plagues is an excellent model to imitate, especially regarding Christ's Second Coming. Jesus will return, and Scripture provides a fair bit of information about the end times. But we do not know the day or the hour. As it could happen at any time, we are to be vigilant and watchful (Mark 13:32–37).

PRAY WITH US

Will you thank God today for our Food Service employees? They are an integral part of Moody Bible Institute's day-to-day operations, as they provide nutritious meals to students and staff throughout the year.

*Since we have now been justified by his blood,
how much more shall we be saved from
God's wrath through him!*

Romans 5:9

The First Passover

The Last Supper, celebrated by us today as communion or the Lord's Table, was actually Jesus' last Passover. This special meal commemorating freedom from slavery in Egypt has endured through the centuries as a celebration of God's redemption. In the Last Supper, Jesus established a new symbolism—the bread for His body, the wine for His blood—but the meal remains a celebration of God's redemption (Luke 22:7–20).

The Passover was such a significant event that all of Israel's history would be dated from it (12:2). This was month one of year one! The story of this day would be told to every new generation (12:24–27). The Passover meal itself was filled with symbolism: The bitter herbs represented the many years of suffering and bondage. The bread without yeast was a reminder that it was originally eaten in haste, as the people prepared to leave Egypt. The lamb itself was to be unblemished or perfect.

We now know that the Passover lamb foreshadowed Christ Himself (1 Cor. 5:7). When John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to his disciples, he called Him, “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Peter wrote: “You were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors . . . with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18–19).

The night the firstborn males died, Pharaoh changed his mind, summoned Moses to his presence, and agreed to let the people go (12:31–32). The Egyptians were eager to have the Israelites gone, and God gave them favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. So just as He'd said, the former slaves left the country in possession of wealth given them by their former oppressors (Gen. 15:14; Ex. 3:22). The triumph of God was thorough and (nearly) complete!

APPLY THE WORD

The Israelites were marked for life by the blood of the Passover lamb on their doorposts. Similarly, we have been marked for life by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, sacrificed for us. Have you accepted His salvation? By believing in His name, we gain the right to become God's children (John 1:12–13). We're born again into His family (John 3:3)!

PRAY WITH US

As we're reading about Passover in today's devotional, let's bring our thanksgiving to Jesus Christ, the Passover Lamb sacrificed for us. He is our salvation and our righteousness before God. And we are His!

FRIDAY
OCTOBER

11

*Stand firm and you will see the deliverance
the LORD will bring you today.*

Exodus 14:13

Crossing the Red Sea

In art, literature, and music, African Americans have often made reference to the Exodus narrative, comparing it to their own pursuit of freedom. In the folktale, “The People Could Fly,” for example, the story is told that Africans used to be able to fly but during slavery had forgotten how. An old man appears in a field one day, and by speaking ancient words causes the people to remember their power. They take off, flying high above the helpless overseer and his whip, joyfully escaping to a new and better life.

The joy of newfound freedom was certainly evident when the Israelites escaped through the Red Sea. After centuries of bondage, the people of Israel were free. God had worked wonders and humbled one of the superpowers of the ancient world. Egypt was down and out. Or at least they thought so!

But in a shocking turnabout, Pharaoh once again changed his mind and sent his army in pursuit. That moment was no surprise to God (14:3–4). The Israelites, trapped against the shore, didn’t exactly rise to the occasion. They complained, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die?” (14:11). He responded, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today” (14:13). The pillar of cloud and fire, signifying God’s presence, was guiding them in a protective position in the rear.

Miraculously, the Red Sea parted. The Israelites walked through on dry ground, with walls of water rising to their left and right (14:29). In one last burst of delusion, Pharaoh’s army followed them and perished. “When the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant” (14:31).

APPLY THE WORD

Even in this nation-defining moment, Scripture is realistic. The Israelites weren’t steadfast in their faith. God took them on this route because He knew what would happen (13:17–18). We often think efficiency is best, but the Lord sees things differently. It may seem He’s taking you the long way around, but He has your best interests at heart!

PRAY WITH US

Knowledgeable, godly professors are essential for the education of our students—and we are proud of the faculty God has led to Moody. Will you thank God today for our Communications faculty: Kelli Worrall, Jill White, Matthew Moore, and Karyn Hecht?

*The LORD is my strength and my defense;
he has become my salvation.*

Exodus 15:2

SATURDAY
OCTOBER

12

The Celebration Song

The *New England Primer* was one of the most popular books in 17th- and 18th-century America. It sold more than three million copies and taught generations of children how to read and spell. The letters of the alphabet were linked to Bible stories, for example, “A: In Adam’s Fall, we sinned all.” M stood for Moses: “Moses was he who Israel’s host led thro’ the Sea.”

In today’s reading, M could stand for both Moses and his sister Miriam, the first woman in the Bible called a “prophet” (v. 20). Together they led the Israelites in celebrating the Red Sea crossing (vv. 1–2). In the song’s first section (vv. 3–6), God is pictured as a divine “warrior” who fought on behalf of His people and won the victory by hurling the Egyptians to the bottom of the sea. His right hand “shattered the enemy.” The second section (vv. 7–11) repeats this motif with even greater enthusiasm. God’s power is unmatched.

The enemy was so sure of victory that they were already dividing the spoils, but the fact is they never stood a chance. The third section (vv. 12–18) rejoices in drawing the conclusion that God leads and protects His people with power and love. He would surely keep His word and bring them safely to a better land.

God as a Divine Warrior is a recurring image in Scripture. Later in the Pentateuch, Moses described the confrontation with Pharaoh in these terms: “The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes” (Deut. 1:30). Isaiah similarly proclaimed: “The LORD will march out like a champion, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies” (Isa. 42:13).

APPLY THE WORD

Take time to list the three problems or challenges you’re facing at this time. Why are you worried about them? Do any of them stand a chance before God’s power? As He was for the Israelites, so is He for you: “The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God and I will praise him” (Ex. 15:2).

PRAY WITH US

Please add these Communications professors to your prayer list: Robert Gustafson, Rosalie de Rosset, Brian Kammerzelt, and Angela Brown. May their expertise, professionalism, love for God, and wisdom inspire their students.

SUNDAY
OCTOBER

13

I will rain down bread from heaven for you.

Exodus 16:4

Provision and Victory

Have you ever been curious about the “manna” God provided the Israelites? What was it? What did it taste like? Many scholars have tried to give a natural explanation to this miraculous food. Was it algae that grew in the desert when there was dew? Was it the bark, twigs, leaves, or sap of tamarisk bushes or another plant? Was it sweet, sticky secretions left behind by insects on desert plants? But all of these naturalistic explanations fail to account for the manna’s daily renewal (and double before the Sabbath), among other factors. Manna was a supernatural provision—a daily miracle that lasted through 40 years in the wilderness.

After ten plagues and one Red Sea crossing, you might think God deserved a break from Israel’s grumbling. Surely He’d earned their trust! But the people had short spiritual memories. They rarely remembered all that God had done for them, but instead, often carried the

attitude: “What have you done for me lately?”

In today’s reading, God provided five times for His thankless people. First, He provided water by making a bitter spring drinkable. Second, He provided quail meat in such quantities that it “covered the camp.” Third, as mentioned, He provided manna or “bread from heaven” (16:4). Fourth, He provided water again, this time through Moses striking a rock. And fifth, He provided victory over the Amalekites, who had hoped for an easy win over these recently liberated slaves.

Manna in particular showed God’s faithful love and care for His people. They didn’t deserve it, given their grumbling and disobedience. But God’s purpose for these slow learners was that they “know that I am the LORD your God” (16:12). Jesus had in mind this same narrative when He prayed, “Give us today our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11).

APPLY THE WORD

When it’s “those complaining Israelites,” the lack of faith is easy to see. But what about us? Do we remember God’s past blessings and rescues? Or are we nagging Him with the next item on our wishlist? In light of Paul’s exhortation to learn from Israel’s history (1 Cor. 10:1–5), consider devoting your prayer time today to praise and gratitude.

PRAY WITH US

Lord, we want to praise you and thank you for who you are, not for what you do for us. Father, we want to be grateful people, not grumbling people. May the example of the Israelites in today’s reading be a warning and a reminder for us.

*The work is too heavy for you;
you cannot handle it alone.*

Exodus 18:18

MONDAY
OCTOBER

14

Leadership Wisdom

When a group of children were asked to draw a picture of a leader, their portraits were insightful. Emma, age 3, drew her teacher, Ms. Noreen, because “she teaches me.” Jack, age 6, drew a picture of himself leading a pack of turtles to safety. He said, “A leader is someone who makes sure that a place is safe.”

We learn a great deal about godly leadership by considering the life of Moses. Through his father-in-law Reuel, Moses discovered that he still had things to learn. Today’s chapter begins with what was no doubt a welcome reunion between Moses and his family. Reuel—also known as “Jethro,” apparently a title meaning “his excellency”—gave praise for the story so far, sacrificed a burnt offering, and ate a meal “in the presence of God” (vv. 9–12).

An experienced leader, Jethro observed that the Israelites were wearing Moses out with their needs and demands

(v. 18). In the context of God’s overall leadership, Jethro offered Moses advice to fix this state of affairs, and Moses humbly took it, with positive results. The advice was built on three principles. First, delegate. Moses should assign responsibility, sharing the load and developing more leaders. Second, prioritize. He should tend to top-level responsibilities, that is, God’s decrees and instructions (v. 20), while others looked after implementation and application. Third, have a backup plan. When the system didn’t work, he could personally judge the most difficult cases.

What were the qualifications for these leaders in training? In today’s world, we choose leaders who are creative, articulate, and dynamic. But the profile of leadership in Exodus is simply of those who were capable, trustworthy, feared the Lord, and hated dishonest gain (that is, they could not be corrupted by bribes) (v. 21).

APPLY THE WORD

Our modern image of a leader is not always biblical. We admire energy, charisma, and bold vision. Perhaps we should be placing a higher priority on godliness, reverence, integrity, accountability, and wisdom. After all, “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity” (Prov. 11:3).

PRAY WITH US

The Moody Bible Institute student missions conference starts tomorrow. Your prayers will be an encouragement to Dr. Bryan O’Neal, vice president and associate provost, and his staff as they prepare for this four-day event.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

by Dr. Winfred O. Neely

Chair of the Division of Applied Theology and Church Ministries

Q Will there be wealthy people in heaven?

A Yes. All of us! Every redeemed human being in heaven will be wealthy in the “heavenly” meaning of wealth (2 Cor. 8:8–9). What I mean is this: every person in heaven will be wealthy in the sense that they will be free from the power and presence of sin. We will also have a glorified body through which the Holy Spirit will act without hindrance (Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:20–21). Sin will not taint our lives in the slightest way, allowing unhindered fellowship with the triune God and with one another. The spiritual blessing and wealth that are ours right now in Christ will be experienced in a fullness of joy beyond anything we have known or experienced in this life (Rev. 22:1–5). Certainly, we will be wealthy!

Q As Christians, how should we handle material wealth in this life?

A Material wealth in itself is neither sinful nor morally wrong. Indeed, in the Bible, a number of God’s choice servants were wealthy people: Abram (Gen. 13:2), Job (Job 1:1–3), Lydia (Acts 16:14–15). But at the same time, we must remind ourselves that wealth and the abundance of possessions are not the

essence of life. Only Jesus can satisfy! As Christ followers, the men and women whom the Lord has blessed with the abundance of material things have the responsibility before the Lord to steward their wealth wisely for the glory of God and for His kingdom (1 Tim. 6:17–19). We should be thankful for wealthy followers of Christ who invest their wealth in the kingdom of God by giving to their local churches, supporting full-time Christian workers, and partnering with ministries that practice and proclaim God’s Word.

Q Since atheists do not believe in God or Satan, what do they think is the cause of all the evil happening in the world today?

A A consistent atheist does not consider terrible things (murder, rape, robbery, war, lying, stealing) happening in the world today to be evil. Evil is a moral category that implies an absolute standard. For example, some atheists did not want to consider the September 11 terrorist attacks *evil*, because that would acknowledge an absolute standard. A consistent atheist refuses to make such an acknowledgment. Since atheists do not believe in God’s existence, they are forced to account for the world in social, cultural, biological, and chemical categories. What is obviously evil is in their minds a deviation from a cultural

One of the first steps toward Christ that some atheists take is the recognition that evil exists in our world.

or social norm; the cause of evil acts may be mental illness or a lack of education or culture.

In the atheistic construct of the universe, people have no ultimate value and significance. People are just chemicals. Atheism is a tragic and sad worldview with dire consequences for the people and societies that embrace it. One of the first steps toward Christ that some atheists take is the recognition that evil exists in our world and that people are messed up because of sin. C. S. Lewis is a classic case of an atheist who became a believer.

Q **What does the Bible say about physical death?**

A As human beings we are made up of two parts: material and immaterial. Our material part is our physical body; our immaterial part is our soul and spirit. Our soul and spirit and our physical body are united and unified in our present embodied life and experience. Death, however, is a major disruption. It is the separation of our soul and spirit from our physical body. The person who animated the body is gone, no longer present. Physical death, the separation of the soul and spirit from the physical body was not the Lord's creation intent for people. Physical death is one of the consequences of

Adam and Eve's disobedience to God (Gen. 3:17–19) and the ongoing result of living in a fallen world (Gen. 5:1–28). But by His death on the cross, Jesus has stripped physical death of its power, and in His own time the experience of physical death for God's people will be banished from the universe forever (2 Tim. 1:8–10; 1 Cor. 15:50–56; Rev. 21:1–4).

Q **When Christians die, do they immediately go to heaven or do we wait for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?**

A When Christians die, their soul and spirit (two aspects of our immaterial self) go immediately to heaven. Separated from their physical bodies, they will be in the immediate presence of God and in conscious and thrilling fellowship with Christ and the redeemed in heaven (John 11:25; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; 2 Tim. 4:6; 2 Peter 1:12–15). Their physical body, the body we view at funerals, is left on earth.

Resurrection, on the other hand, is the reuniting of the soul and spirit with the physical body. At the Second Coming of Christ for His people, the Lord will reunite the souls and spirits of departed Christians with their physical bodies. These bodies will be glorified forever for the full embodied enjoyment of God (1 Cor. 15:50–57; 1 Thess. 4:13–18). What a glorious prospect for the child of God!

TUESDAY
OCTOBER

15

*You will be for me a kingdom
of priests and a holy nation.*

Exodus 19:6

Making the Covenant

What did God mean when He told the Israelites, “You are a holy nation”? Certainly, they had not been behaving like priests! Scholar Gordon J. Wenham notes that today’s verse effectively sums up the overarching promise of Exodus. “A collection of holy individuals makes a holy nation, which can serve as mediator between God and all the nations of the world. Or as the promise to Abraham put it, ‘In you shall all the families of the earth find blessing’ (Gen. 12:3).”

In today’s reading, God made a covenant or binding contract with Israel, an event which marked the nation’s formal founding and a step in His larger redemptive plan. This covenant took place at Mount Sinai (or Horeb), fulfilling God’s promise to Moses back at the burning bush (Ex. 3:12). As noted previously, the covenant follows the form of an ancient Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaty, in which the suzerain (king or lord) promises protection and

provision in exchange for faithfulness and obedience from the vassal (common people). But it wasn’t really that simple. The Israelites often failed to keep their responsibilities, while God kept His side with perfect faithfulness and love.

This relationship and its purposes went beyond the ordinary cultural form of a treaty. Here, God called Israel His “treasured possession” (v. 5). His deeds on their behalf in Egypt proved His lavish care and generosity (v. 4). Their identity as “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (v. 6) wasn’t just about them, but about God’s intention for them to mediate His grace and righteousness to the nations. The people agreed by pledging obedience (vv. 7–8), consecrating themselves, and holding a formal ratification ceremony at the foot of the mountain. This took place about seven weeks after the initial Exodus and would be commemorated annually as the Feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:15–21).

APPLY THE WORD

Israel was so dear to the Lord that He called them His “treasured possession” (Ex. 19:5). “Treasure” is a rich, fascinating image in Scripture, used for everything from everyday fatherly wisdom (Prov. 2:1–5) to the incalculable value of God’s kingdom (Matt. 13:44–46). We studied this topic earlier this year in *Today in the Word* (June 2019).

PRAY WITH US

Uphold in prayer Moody’s president, Dr. Mark Jobe, as he opens the student Missions Conference today and participates in all other sessions. Ask for the fruitful and spiritually enriching time for all attendees, and specifically for strength and stamina for Dr. Jobe.

You shall have no other gods before me.

Exodus 20:3

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER

16

The Ten Commandments

“A time will come in human history,” wrote Dallas Willard in *The Divine Conspiracy*, “when human beings will follow the Ten Commandments . . . as regularly as they fall to the ground when they step off a roof. They will then be more astonished that someone would lie or steal or covet than they now are when someone will not. The law of God will then be written in their hearts as the prophets foretold.”

The Ten Commandments echo down through history, from Mount Sinai to the Second Coming of Christ. They are the heart of God’s covenant requirements and the ethical core of the Law. They begin with the people’s obligations to God, then move on to their obligations toward one another.

The first commandment proclaims that God alone is to be worshiped (v. 3). There can be no rival gods, no syncretism, no paganism among His

holy people. The second commandment forbids idols or images of created things that people might be tempted to worship (vv. 4–6). Doing so was common among their contemporaries, but they were to worship using only altars made of earth or undressed stone (vv. 22–26). The third commandment prohibited the misuse of God’s name (v. 7). This included profanity, false oaths, and flippant use in general. The fourth commanded the people to honor the Sabbath (vv. 8–11). Based on creation, the seventh day was to be a holy day, set apart for rest, not work. The fifth commandment enjoined respect and honor for one’s parents (v. 12; see also Prov. 20:20; 1 Tim. 5:8).

The final five commandments banned murder (v. 13), adultery (v. 14), stealing (v. 15), lying or false witness (v. 16), and coveting or envy (v. 17). Since the latter included coveting your neighbor’s wife, that means lust is prohibited as well.

APPLY THE WORD

The principle of Sabbath rest is rooted in creation and is still God’s desire for us today. Are you enjoying God’s blessing of rest? Two good books on this topic are *The Radical Pursuit of Rest: Escaping the Productivity Trap* by John Koessler and *The Art of Rest: Faith to Hit Pause in a World That Never Stops* by Adam Mabry.

PRAY WITH US

Lord, thank you for the truth of your Word, showing us in today’s reading your covenant requirements and laws—the Ten Commandments. Help us accept and follow them with humility, wisdom, integrity, and godliness.

THURSDAY
OCTOBER

17

These are the laws you are to set before them.

Exodus 21:1

Personal Responsibility

The *State of the Bible* 2018 report, commissioned by the American Bible Society and conducted by Barna Research, found that Americans could be divided into five categories: (1) Bible Centered daily readers (9%), (2) Bible Engaged weekly readers (17%), (3) Bible Friendly (15%); and (4) Bible Neutral (5%). The fifth category, Bible Disengaged, was by far the most populated at 54 percent, those who rarely interacted with Scripture at all.

Joshua commanded the Israelites: “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it” (Josh. 1:8). With the core of the Law set in the Ten Commandments, the book of Exodus goes on to explain specific regulations for how to live out that core.

First, they defined limits to indentured servanthood, a form of slavery in that day often resulting from debt or war

(vv. 2–11). This may have been addressed first due to the Israelites’ own history as slaves. While in some ways slaves were considered property, it’s clear here that they possessed rights and were considered persons within the justice system. A slave could even choose to stay with his master for life, a relationship which would provide food, shelter, and stability. Second, justice should be done in cases of personal injury (vv. 12–36). One factor was outcome, with human death being the most serious (see Gen. 9:6). Another was intention—only someone who had killed a person unintentionally could flee to a city of refuge. A third factor was relationship—the death penalty was invoked in cases of attacking one’s parents (the fifth commandment).

The Law describes justice in a manner known as *lex talionis*, that is, “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” (vv. 23–25).

APPLY THE WORD

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus often said: “You have heard that it was said . . . But I tell you.” In doing so, Jesus set forth a higher law, one that goes beyond *lex talionis*, or retaliation. Instead Jesus taught “turning the other cheek” or the “law of love” (Matt. 5:38–42). We encourage you to read Matthew 5–7 alongside Exodus this week.

PRAY WITH US

As Missions Conference continues on campus, please pray for the students who attend. May they be refreshed, encouraged, and challenged to share the gospel in their daily lives and respond to the call to missions.

You are to be my holy people.

Exodus 22:31

FRIDAY
OCTOBER

18

Social Responsibility

Musician and author Michael Card recently released both a book and an album on *hesed*, the Hebrew word for the Lord’s covenant faithfulness and love. As he wrote in the book: “Hesed is a defining characteristic of God. It is linked to his compassion and graciousness. It is expressed in his willingness to forgive wrongdoing and to take upon himself the sin, rebellion, and wrongdoing of his people.”

Hesed permeates the Law and the covenant, even down to the smallest details. The Israelites were commanded, for example, to help with a lost or injured donkey even if the animal belonged to an enemy (23:4–5). Why? Because that’s what God would do. Today’s reading lays out additional specific regulations. First, restitution needed to be made for property damage (22:1–15). Outcomes, intentions, and circumstances were all taken into account. Was it dark? Was it preventable? Was negligence

involved? Thieves being required to pay back double was expected to have a deterrent effect.

Second, the community should take responsibility for key social issues—everything from marriage to sexual perversion to witchcraft to caring for the vulnerable, including widows and orphans (22:16–31; see also James 1:27). Marriage was seen as both sexual union and a social institution. Witchcraft, sorcery, and occult practices were treated as idolatry, as they implied a partnership with demonic powers. Foreigners were to receive the same justice as Israelites. Moneylending was framed as assistance in time of need rather than as a business deal for profit. Other rules prohibited blasphemy, cursing leaders, false witness, favoritism (see James 2:1–4), and perverting or denying justice (bribery). These kinds of sinful practices went against God’s ideal of becoming a “holy people.”

APPLY THE WORD

Exodus 23:2 sounds like a quote from a modern book on peer pressure: “Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong.” Why do you think “the crowd” is likely to be headed in the wrong direction? Without Christ, people’s perceptions, thoughts, choices, and actions default to evil. What’s an area in your life in which you especially need God’s help?

PRAY WITH US

Launch a Leader, Moody’s fundraising event starts today and continues until the end of the month. You may receive a phone call from a Moody student and can help fund our undergraduate students’ education in Chicago. Thank you for standing with us!

SATURDAY
OCTOBER

19

Be careful to do everything I have said to you.

Exodus 23:13

Sleep and Celebration

Recent studies have revealed that the consequences of sleep deprivation are severe, including increased risk of infections, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, strokes, Alzheimer’s disease, and certain kinds of cancer, as well as irritability, mental distress, and depression. Children and youth are especially affected, since too little sleep can negatively affect their development and emotional stability.

In our body’s physical design, the Creator included a need for rest and Sabbath. In today’s reading, the principle behind the fourth commandment was extended even to the land (vv. 10–12). Every seventh year was to be a year off from farmland use. Anything that grew there on its own was to be left for the poor to glean. The Sabbath applied to slaves and animals as well.

Three annual festivals were also announced (vv. 14–17). First, the

Festival of Unleavened Bread would commemorate the Exodus and Passover. Second, the Festival of Harvest (or Weeks) would be for rejoicing in the firstfruits of the harvest. And third, the Festival of Ingathering (or Tabernacles) would be to give thanks for the final harvest. Israelite males (and their families) were required to assemble three times per year to worship the Lord on these occasions.

Once again, God vowed that His presence would lead the people of Israel on the journey to Canaan. He sent an “angel,” which might be God Himself via an oblique reference, a specially commissioned angel, or even the preincarnate second Person of the Trinity (vv. 20–21). In any case, He promised to fight on their behalf, just as He had at the Red Sea crossing (vv. 27–30). The people’s primary responsibility was not to be ensnared by idolatry but to worship Him alone (vv. 13, 32–33).

APPLY THE WORD

Feasting and food were important for Israelite festivals and worship. The same can be true for us today. After all, who hasn’t enjoyed a church potluck? Though we think of “worship” mainly in terms of singing or Bible teaching, it can also apply to meal fellowship and hospitality. Why not invite the Lord to be present at your next church meal?

PRAY WITH US

As we learn about worship in our Scripture reading these several days, let’s pray that the Lord will open our hearts and minds to worship Him with our whole lives. Ask Him to show you the way to bring glory to Him with your work, leisure, and even meals.

*We will do everything the LORD has said;
we will obey.*

Exodus 24:7

SUNDAY
OCTOBER

20

Worshipping God

Why do we worship? In *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*, James K. A. Smith explained: “In worship we don’t just come to show God our devotion and give him our praise; we are called to worship because in this encounter God (re)makes and molds us top-down. Worship is the arena in which God recalibrates our hearts, reforms our desires, and rehabilitates our loves. Worship isn’t just something we do; it is where God does something to us.”

As the people of Israel finished ratifying the covenant, they certainly found this to be true. These worship events were intended for their spiritual transformation.

Today’s reading resumes from Exodus 19:25 narrating the ratification ceremony. Exodus 20–23 was the “Book of the Covenant,” that is, the initial provisions of the Law and covenant written down by Moses. Ratification involved at least

four elements: 1. Moses formalized the covenant by writing it down (24:4a). 2. Twelve stone pillars were erected, symbolizing all twelve tribes and reminding them of their commitment to obedience (vv. 4b, 7). 3. Altars were set up. Though the priesthood had not yet been inaugurated, Moses supervised burnt offerings for sin and fellowship offerings, symbolizing peace with God (vv. 5–6). The principle of blood atonement was prominent (v. 8). 4. And finally—as would have been expected within the formation of the suzerain-vassal treaty—a feast was held to mark the covenant’s beginning (vv. 9–11). Along with the leaders of Israel, God Himself participated in this incredible celebration!

After all this, Moses went up the mountain to receive the rest of the Law. He would stay there 40 days and 40 nights, not coming down again until Exodus 32 and the golden calf episode.

APPLY THE WORD

Moses confronted Pharaoh and led the Israelites through the Red Sea. He was God’s mediator for the covenant. He met with God. To assert, then, that “Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses” is a bold statement indeed (see Heb. 3:1–6). Praise God that everything Moses foreshadowed has been fulfilled in our Lord and Savior.

PRAY WITH US

Lord Jesus, thank you for everything you are showing us about worship from the book of Exodus. Thank you that we can worship you in Spirit and in truth.

MONDAY
OCTOBER

21

You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give.

Exodus 25:2

Worship Through Giving

When King Joash, guided by the high priest Jehoiada, was restoring Solomon’s temple, he ordered a chest to be placed outside it and issued a proclamation asking people to bring gifts (2 Chron. 24:1–16). Everyone “brought their contributions gladly, dropping them into the chest until it was full” (v. 10). The money collected was used to pay the artists and craftsmen working on the project. The people were so generous that they filled the chest many times.

As recorded in 2 Chronicles, the Israelites were following the generous example of their ancestors. In today’s reading, we see the call to go out for gifts to be used in constructing the tabernacle. The people responded with enthusiasm. Where did these former slaves get all these treasures? From the Egyptians (Ex. 12:35–36)! What beautiful irony that the wealth of their former masters would now be used to worship the God who had liberated them.

The people’s offerings were used to build the tabernacle, including all its furnishings and especially the Ark of the Covenant, symbolizing God’s throne (25:10–22). On top of the Ark would be an “atonement cover” or “mercy seat,” indicating that God rules with mercy, as well as attendant cherubim, representing His power. The colors of the tabernacle also symbolized His divine kingship, as purple stood for royalty and blue for divinity.

The two stone tablets would be placed inside the Ark because the Law and covenant were at the heart of God’s relationship with His people. Later it would also contain a sample of manna, as a reminder of God’s provision (Ex. 16:32–34; Heb. 9:4). The Ark of the Covenant was the only piece of furniture in the Most Holy Place inside the tabernacle, a space that could be entered only once per year (26:31–35).

APPLY THE WORD

We are called to be generous. When you put money in the collection plate or set up an autogift to a ministry, do you see it as an act of worship? God told Moses to accept offerings “from everyone whose heart prompts them to give” (25:2). The same principle is seen in the New Testament (2 Cor. 9:7). How’s your heart for giving?

PRAY WITH US

As we read today about worship through giving, we’d like to thank all the friends of Moody Bible Institute who have supported our ministries with their prayers and finances. According to Exodus 25:2, your heart prompted you to give, and we’re grateful.

[Christ] went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands.

Hebrews 9:11

TUESDAY
OCTOBER

22

A Sacred Space

Many commentators see a connection between God’s instructions for the tabernacle and the Genesis creation narrative. Bryan D. Estelle explained in *Echoes of Exodus*: “Why is this important? Because it indicates that the creation at the beginning of time is a sacred space, just as the tabernacle and the temple were later recognized to be spaces of sacred presence . . . The divine presence lost in Eden becomes the central catastrophe in the biblical drama. The building of the tabernacle according to a model as God’s presence or dwelling in the midst of his people at least partially resolves that problem.”

In other words, the construction of the tabernacle not only had national significance for Israel but it also had cosmic significance within God’s overall plan for human history. Today’s reading continues God’s instructions for the tabernacle. How were these items arranged? The focus was a tent-like

structure that housed two areas—the Most Holy Place (with the Ark) and the Holy Place, which included the altar of incense, the table for bread, and the lampstand. The twelve loaves of bread on the table signified God’s provision, while the lampstand was associated with light, life, and God’s glory.

Outside in the courtyard stood the altar of burnt offering and a bronze water basin. This rectangular space was surrounded by a kind of fence made of cloth. The entrance to the courtyard faced east, as would be true for Solomon’s temple and had been true for the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). The altar of burnt offering stood in the eastern half of the courtyard (vv. 1–8). The “horns” (corner projections) of the altar symbolized atonement, as the blood from the sacrifices was sprinkled on them. Later these horns would be a place where guilty people could flee for refuge or mercy (see 1 Kings 2:28).

APPLY THE WORD

There are many connections between the Old and New Testaments. You may have noticed several references to the book of Hebrews this month. Its teaching about the superiority of Christ often refers to the Law and the covenant. If you’d like to go deeper, read Hebrews 9, which discusses the superiority of Christ compared to the tabernacle.

PRAY WITH US

Ken Heullitt, chief financial officer, sees God’s provision for Moody every day in the area of finances. Please join him and his team in prayer and praise to the Lord for His faithfulness and for surrounding Moody with faithful friends.

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER

23

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, God's special possession.*

1 Peter 2:9

A Holy Priesthood

Have you ever seen the commissioning of a pastor or missionary when church leaders lay their hands on the person's shoulders and pray over them? When Paul and Barnabas set out on the very first missionary journey, the church at Antioch commissioned them with prayer, fasting, and the laying on of hands (Acts 13:1–3). They were set apart for a holy purpose. While Paul and Barnabas were the ones being sent, their mission work represented the entire church.

The same was true in today's reading for the ordination of Aaron and his sons into the priesthood. In this case, though, the priests laid hands on sacrificial animals, identifying with them on behalf of the nation before offering them to the Lord. The new priests' ministry responsibilities would be to offer sacrifices, teach the Law, and exhort the people to obey it. This work was so important that God gave special instructions for the high priestly garments (Ex. 28). The "ephod"

was a kind of sleeveless vest. It fit over the breastpiece, which carried twelve mounted jewels, each engraved with the name of one of the tribes. The priest represented the entire nation, as did the tribes' names engraved on two onyx stones mounted on his shoulders. He also wore a robe with bells, tunic, sash, linen undergarments, and a turban bearing a metal plate with the inscription "Holy to the Lord."

We know little about the Urim and the Thummim carried by the high priest, but they seem to have been lots for seeking the Lord's will (see 1 Sam. 14:36–42; Prov. 16:33). The consecration ceremony lasted seven days (Ex. 29). Aaron and his sons were washed, dressed in the special garments, and anointed with oil. They offered sin offerings and burnt offerings, consecrating the new altar as well as themselves (29:36–37). Ultimately, the consecrating power was God's glory (29:43).

APPLY THE WORD

Do you think you are holy? As a believer, you are "consecrated," meaning you are "set apart for holy purposes." This should affect our attitude toward everything in our lives (1 Tim. 4:4–5). For example, have you dedicated your home or work space to the Lord? Today, ask God to be present and to reign there in a special way.

PRAY WITH US

Father, show us what being holy means in today's world. Help us better understand the Levite priesthood in Exodus and how it relates to our lives now. Holy Spirit, lead us on the road of dedicating our homes and work spaces to the Lord.

May my prayer be set before you like incense.

Psalms 141:2

THURSDAY
OCTOBER

24

The Altar of Incense

For many of us today, the word “worship” brings to mind praise music. Biblically, however, the concept is much larger. As Old Testament scholar Daniel I. Block expounded recently in *Christianity Today*: “Scripture clearly demonstrates that the measure of true and acceptable corporate worship is not established by outside observers, by the worshipers who attend, or by the performers of the rituals but by God, the One who graciously invites us into his presence and who delights in being the object of our worship. Accordingly, true worship involves reverential acts of submission and homage before the divine ruler in response to his gracious revelation of himself and in keeping with his revealed will.”

This larger concept of “worship” is seen in God’s instructions for the tabernacle. Today’s reading focuses on the altar of incense, which was to be put in the Holy Place (vv. 1–10), along with

the lampstand and the table with the bread. This gold altar would be tended mornings and evenings along with the lampstand and was reserved exclusively for the burning of incense. The incense burned there was to be a special blend reserved only for this purpose (vv. 34–38). Biblically, the smoke of the incense represents the prayers of God’s people (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8).

As God’s covenant people, all Israeli adults were required to pay a “ransom for [their] life” (vv. 11–16). The half-shekel amount applied to rich and poor alike, for all lives are equally valuable in His eyes. If not paid, it could bring about a plague judgment, for this “atonement money” expressed trust in the Lord rather than in the results of a census. These funds would go toward tabernacle maintenance and services. The entire nation was commanded to invest in the needs of their new national worship center.

APPLY THE WORD

Unfamiliar to most of us, incense is still burned in some Christian traditions as part of the worship service. For some, its fragrance helps create a sensory, engaging worship environment and experience. If you wish, research the use of incense in church history and current practice.

PRAY WITH US

Lift up in prayer Frank Leber who is retiring after 23 years of faithful service as head of Information Technology Services. And please welcome John Saucedo who is succeeding Frank as chief information officer. God’s blessings on both!

FRIDAY
OCTOBER

25

*I have filled him with the Spirit of God,
with wisdom, with understanding,
with knowledge and with all kinds of skills.*

Exodus 31:3

Gifted for Work

When I was a child, my church would hold a festive “Harvest Party” in October for the children. We were told to dress as Bible characters and share our stories to see who could guess our names. I dressed as Bezalel—in a bathrobe, of course, like most of the other children. When I told how I’d been gifted by God to build the tabernacle, I was met with a sea of blank faces. The other kids were stumped, and I won a prize!

The building of the tabernacle was so important to God that He gave two men, Bezalel and Oholiab, special abilities so that His instructions would be followed with excellence. About Bezalel, the Lord said: “I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts” (vv. 3–4). Oholiab was Bezalel’s assistant.

Notice how God provided for every aspect of the tabernacle. He gave instructions regarding its design and floor plan. He supplied materials (Egyptian wealth) for the people to give. He set apart Aaron and his sons as priests to minister in it. And He even chose two capable men to be the leaders for this complex project.

Even though work on the tabernacle was important, it was not to be done on the Sabbath (vv. 12–17). God’s work always needs to be done God’s way!

Verse 18 reminds us that Moses had been up on Mount Sinai all this time, receiving these instructions. The “two tablets” were two copies of the covenant, one for each side, as was customary. What was amazing in this case was that they’d been “inscribed by the finger of God”!

APPLY THE WORD

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit filled specific believers for special tasks. However, we can be “filled with the Spirit” all the time. Jesus promised that He would send the Spirit to empower the church (John 14:15–31). On a practical, everyday basis, this means living with the Spirit’s wisdom in control of our perceptions, thoughts, and actions.

PRAY WITH US

Thank you, Father, that you created us with our own unique talents and skills. Just as you equipped Bezalel and Oholiab with special abilities to build the tabernacle, you equip each of us for your service. Help us to work for your glory, no matter what we do.

*They have been quick to turn away
from what I commanded them.*

Exodus 32:8

SATURDAY
OCTOBER

26

Breaking the Covenant

After Gideon's victory over the Midianites, the Israelites asked him to become their king, but he refused, saying, "The Lord will rule over you." He did, though, ask them to give him a share of the plunder. He turned the gold into an "ephod"—although it's uncertain exactly what that was in this case, it was obviously used for idolatrous purposes. It thus became a spiritual "snare" to Gideon, his family, and the entire nation (Judg. 8:22–27).

In this passage, the writer of Judges alludes to the golden calf episode from today's reading. This famous story happened shortly after the ratification of the covenant, so the Israelites couldn't claim ignorance or forgetfulness. It took little more than a month for them to go directly against their vows of faithfulness and obedience.

It was about as bad as it could be. The Israelites grumbled against God and

Moses. Aaron failed as a leader, later blaming the people and making the absurd excuse of unintentionality (vv. 22–24). They created and worshiped an idol, violating the first and second commandments. Their idolatry even included "revelry," a euphemism for sexual immorality (v. 6). The influence of this national sin would echo through the years, even as far as the divided kingdom (1 Kings 12:26–33).

All this angered the Lord to the point where He threatened to destroy them and instead make a great nation out of Moses. Moses interceded on their behalf, however, and God relented (vv. 7–14). When Moses saw the situation for himself, he was righteously angry (v. 19). Breaking the tablets demonstrated that the nation had broken God's covenant. When the Levites rallied to his call and struck down idolaters throughout the camp, they earned for themselves God's blessing (v. 29).

APPLY THE WORD

Is anything holding you back from discipleship? The Levites' actions showed they valued the Lord above all relationships. Jesus taught this hard truth as well: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

PRAY WITH US

We invite you to thank God together for His covenant love and faithfulness that is demonstrated in this month's study. Today's reading, through the Levites' actions, challenges us to value the Lord above all. Are we up to the challenge?

SUNDAY
OCTOBER

27

*Teach me your ways so I may know you
and continue to find favor with you.*

Exodus 33:13

Intercession and Mercy

Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery in 1849. The next year, she returned and led her niece and two children to freedom. She went back 13 times and led approximately 70 slaves to freedom, becoming the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad. She was never caught, and she never lost a “passenger.” She also spied for Union forces during the Civil War. For her courage and leadership, she became known as the “Moses of her people.”

On several occasions, Moses rescued the Israelites from God’s wrath through intercessory prayer. As we read yesterday, he pleaded with the Lord not to destroy Israel (Ex. 32:11–14). After he’d chastised the people, he again prayed for them, even to the point of saying, “Please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (Ex. 32:31–32). God rejected this offer, but it showed Moses’ deep love for his people.

Moses was in such continuous prayer for Israel that he set up a “tent of meeting” outside the camp (33:7–11). Remarkably, God would meet there with him “face to face, as one speaks to a friend.” In today’s reading, Moses made three requests. First, he wanted a closer relationship with the Lord: “Teach me your ways so I may know you” (33:13). This prayer was answered in God’s proclamation of Himself as “the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin” (34:6–7).

Second, Moses asked for God’s presence to accompany the people (33:15–16; 34:8–9). This request was granted, a response that was also due to their repentance (33:3–6). The covenant was restored. And third, Moses asked to see God’s glory, a request that was also granted, but only partially (33:18–21).

APPLY THE WORD

God’s proclamation of Himself in Exodus 34:6–7 is quoted many times in the Old Testament (see, for instance, Psalm 86:15 and Joel 2:13). Take time today to meditate on and give praise for these verses. Remember events in your life when you have seen these qualities of God in action. And ask Him to give you a prayer life like that of Moses!

PRAY WITH US

Uphold general counsel Janet Stiven and her team in the Legal department in prayer before the Lord. Pray that God will give them wisdom in all they do. May He always be honored through the legal integrity of all Moody’s endeavors.

All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the LORD has commanded.

Exodus 35:10

MONDAY
OCTOBER

28

Art for God's Sake

In 2003, an Egyptian lawyer announced plans to sue “all the Jews of the world” for the gold, silver, jewels, and other treasures “stolen” from the Egyptians in the Exodus. Based on Exodus 35:12–36 in today’s reading, he calculated the amount to be at least 300 tons of gold—plus 5,758 years’ worth of interest!

The wealth taken from the Egyptians in the Exodus made possible the construction of the tabernacle. How appropriate that these riches, linked to slavery and idolatry, would now be used for worship of the one true God!

From Exodus 35–40, God’s instructions were carried out and the tabernacle was built. Bezalel and Oholiab and their volunteer team of men and women took the gold, silver, and other materials given by the people and got to work. This obedience contrasts strongly with Israel’s flagrant disobedience in chapter 32, especially in terms of what use was

made of their material and artistic gifts. One was sinful and idolatrous, the other righteous and worshipful.

Why were the detailed instructions of earlier chapters repeated again? The *NIV Study Bible* explains: “Such repetition was a common feature of ancient Near Eastern literature and was intended to fix the details of a narrative in the reader’s mind.” This was particularly helpful in an oral culture, when books were not available.

As the work started, the craftsmen encountered a rare problem—too much giving (36:3–7)! Moses had to command the people to stop. Repentance and discipline after the golden calf episode had transformed their hearts. Permission to begin work on the tabernacle served as an additional reassurance that the covenant still existed, and God’s presence would continue to go with them on the journey ahead.

APPLY THE WORD

The Lord has given you special talents and abilities to use for His glory, as well as spiritual gifts for service in the church. Using them to build only a successful career or a comfortable life is like creating a golden calf. Are you obediently using your talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts for God’s glory? Is He leading you to do more?

PRAY WITH US

Today, let’s continue to ask for God’s leading and direction in using our talents and spiritual gifts for His glory. Also, pray that He would show you what needs to change and if He has more tasks for you to do for the Kingdom.

TUESDAY
OCTOBER

29

*Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God, my joy and my delight.*

Psalm 43:4

The Altar of God

The “stolen goods” lawsuit threatened in yesterday’s illustration was not the first time this has happened. The Talmud tells a story about a similar claim lodged in the court of Alexander the Great. A man named Geviha ben Pesisa, representing the Jews, asked about the source of the claim. “The Torah,” the Egyptians answered. “Very well,” replied Geviha, “I too will invoke the Torah, which says that the Jews spent 430 years laboring in Egypt. Please compensate us for 600,000 men’s work for that period of time.” The case was dismissed!

As construction of the tabernacle continued, everything was done precisely as God had instructed. It’s as if we’re reading the same chapters again, with “would” changed to “was.” The Israelites carefully followed every detail of God’s directions. “As the Lord commanded Moses” becomes a kind of refrain. When it comes to obedience, “details” are everything!

Bezalel taught and supervised the other craftsmen, but when it came to the Ark of the Covenant, he himself did the work. The artist whom God had specially chosen, commissioned, and filled with His Spirit was the right person to construct the tabernacle’s holiest object. The project proceeded next to the altar of incense, table for the bread, and lampstand—all gold due to their proximity to the Ark—then to the altar of burnt offering, wash basin, and linen fence curtains. Chapter 38 ends with an impressive list of materials used, including more than a ton of gold, 3.75 tons of silver, and 2.5 tons of bronze.

Interestingly, the text mentions “women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting” (38:8). Another translation calls them “ministering women.” Based on the verb used for “serve,” this was an organized group of some kind, perhaps started when the women donated their bronze mirrors.

APPLY THE WORD

Who were these “ministering women”? They are mentioned again only in 1 Samuel 2:22 and perhaps in Psalm 68:11. What we do know is that they were willing to work behind the scenes. They didn’t need glory for themselves. They simply wanted to serve and worship the Lord. There’s a lot we can learn from their humble attitudes!

PRAY WITH US

What a beautiful example of the humble service to the Lord is revealed in “ministering women” (Ex. 38:8)! Please bring before the Lord today your thoughts and concerns about your own service at work and in church.

*The Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us.*

John 1:14

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER

30

It Is Finished!

Philip Graham Ryken, the president of Wheaton College, wrote: “Art for God’s sake—this is what the tabernacle was all about. Every detail in that sacred building was for the praise of God’s glory. The altar and the atonement cover (also known as the mercy seat) testified to his grace. The table of the showbread proclaimed his providence. The lampstand spread his light. But even the things that were not symbolic were for God. This is why the tabernacle was made so carefully, with such fine materials and elaborate decorations: it was all for the glory of God.”

Completing the tabernacle was a milestone moment in Israel’s history (v. 32). It would be Israel’s center for national worship until Solomon built the temple centuries later. On Bezalel’s list, the priestly garments were the last items to be done. Moses carried out the final inspection. The people had done exactly as they’d been told (vv. 42–43)!

The work had required obedience, generosity, skill, administrative abilities, artistic gifts, and the filling of the Spirit.

The aesthetic qualities of the tabernacle and worship were important to God. The high priest’s robe was decorated with pomegranates and golden bells. The blue, purple, and scarlet twisted linen yarn would have been striking, though we don’t know the exact pattern. The ephod and breastpiece, which included metalwork and jewelry, required intricate tailoring. The same is true throughout God’s instructions—excellence and beauty are essential. Why? Because the tabernacle represented God’s presence with His people, and for such a purpose only the best will do. The same was true when God chose His Son as the only worthy sacrifice for sin. We stand amazed and humbled that “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14), meaning He “tabernacled” among us.

APPLY THE WORD

If you haven’t already, look up an illustration or floor plan of the Jewish tabernacle, found in many study Bibles and commentaries. They represent scholars’ best historical, cultural, and archaeological conjectures about what objects actually looked like. Even a simple picture can enhance your understanding of Exodus.

PRAY WITH US

As we’re coming to the end of our study of Exodus this month, let’s thank the Lord for giving us His Word, for the gift of faith—“the evidence of things not seen”—and for instilling in us the desire and the ability to obey Him and to do His will.

THURSDAY
OCTOBER

31

The glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

Exodus 40:35

The Glory of the Lord Descends on the Tabernacle

In their classic song, “King of Glory,” the Christian musical group Third Day rejoices: “Who is this King of glory with strength and majesty / And wisdom beyond measure, the gracious King of kings / The Lord of earth and heaven, the Creator of all things / He is the King of glory, He’s everything to me.”

As the book of Exodus concludes, the tabernacle was set up and the glory of the Lord descended. This was one year after the Passover was instituted at the start of the Exodus (v. 2; see 12:2). As God’s mediator, Moses was the leader in charge of the set-up. He began with the Ark and the Most Holy Place and moved outward to the courtyard, anointing everything with oil in order to consecrate it (v. 9). Next Aaron and his sons were also consecrated and the work of the priesthood began.

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled

the tabernacle” (v. 35). The pillar of cloud and fire that had guided and protected Israel thus far settled on the tabernacle as a sign of God’s presence and approval. The “glory of the LORD” was so real and powerful that not even Moses could enter. The people responded with worship, thereby fulfilling the tabernacle’s purpose and bringing the book to an auspicious close.

The book of Exodus opened with the descendants of Jacob in bondage. But God took them on an epic journey that included a spiritual-political showdown with a world superpower, dramatic liberation, miracles, covenant-making, grumbling, disobedience, idolatry, repentance, mercy, obedience, and His presence through it all. The key: God’s covenant love and faithfulness. The future looked bright. Ahead lay the promised land. The God who had called them to be a “holy nation” would never fail them (19:6; 1 Peter 2:9–10).

APPLY THE WORD

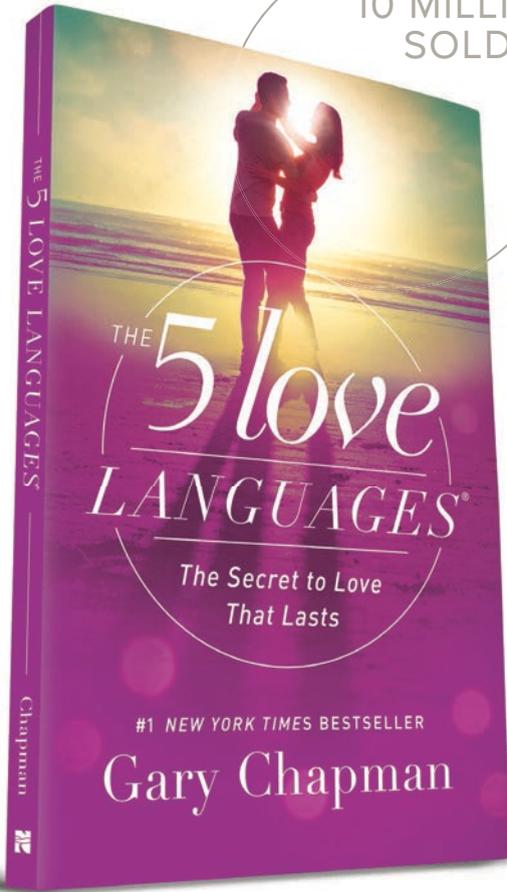
We hope you enjoyed and were challenged by this month’s study of Exodus. Let’s review! What were the major themes? What did you learn about God? How can you apply these stories to your own spiritual journey? How might you share what you learned with others? Give thanks to God for who He is and for how He has shown His love for us.

PRAY WITH US

Thank you for praying and studying the book of Exodus with *Today in the Word* this month! In this month’s study, we saw God’s faithfulness to Israel, and today praise Him that through His Son, He includes us into the narrative of His glory.

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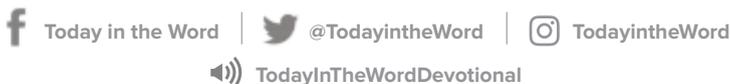
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